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OPI VIDEO UPDATE

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The House Office of Public Information (OPI) has updated its video library to include:

 Education Committee Chair Proctor's Introduction of Proposed Committee Bill 12-02

To view the latest OPI videos, please visit the <u>Public Guide</u> page of the <u>House website</u>.

NOTEWORTHY

Enhanced Human Trafficking Penalties

Human trafficking has increasingly become a problem in Florida, with labor trafficking being the most prevalent type. To combat the growing amount of trafficking, House Members on Friday passed legislation to enhance Florida's laws and increase penalties for those engaging in human trafficking. House Bill 7049, passed unanimously, makes several changes to human trafficking laws and statutes like increasing penalties to first degree felonies. The bill also provides an enhanced penalty for those who traffic minors or persons who are not legally authorized to work in the United States.

For more information on the penalty and law changes in House Bill 7049, please visit the bill page on the House website.

Tax Exemptions and College Credits Approved for Military Personnel

House Members unanimously approved House Bills 347 and 7113, which provide assistance to those who fight for and protect our country. House Bill 347 requires the Board of Governors to adopt regulations and the State Board of Education to adopt rules that enable eligible members of the United States Armed Forces to earn academic college credit at Florida's public universities for college-level training and education acquired in the military. House Bill 7113 amends Florida Statute to update the designated operations for which deployed service members can qualify for an additional ad valorem tax exemption.

Relief for Senior Citizens

This week, Members also passed unanimously several pieces of legislation to reduce the burden of property taxes on Florida's senior citizens. House Joint Resolution 55 proposes an amendment to the state Constitution to authorize the Legislature to permit counties and municipalities to limit assessed value of homestead properties of certain low-income seniors. The limitation would apply if the property market value is no more than 150 percent of the average homestead market value in the county.

Additionally, <u>House Joint Resolution 169</u> proposes an amendment to the state Constitution to authorize the Legislature to allow counties and municipalities to grant an additional homestead tax exemption to certain low-income seniors who have been long-term Florida residents. <u>House Bill 357</u> implements the amendment proposed by House Joint Resolution 169.



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NOTEWORTHY (cont'd)

Updates to Controlled Substances List

The House also approved House Bill 1175, which amends Florida Statutes to include additional synthetic cannabinoid and bath salt substances to Schedule I of Florida's controlled substance categories. Schedule 1 substances have a high potential for abuse and have no currently accepted medical use in the United States. Under House Bill 1175, possession, and sale or purchase (depending on the amount) of these substances is a third degree felony.

House Floor Action February 22-24, 2012

Members of the Florida House took up 110 bills this week. Of the 110 bills, Members passed 104. In addition, 91 bills were passed unanimously.

View the Florida House Calendar page to stay up-to-date on the progress of bills.

Look up a bill with the Florida House's Bill Search

RESOURCES

House Publications

OPI Pulse

The House Office of Public Information has released two Pulse documents to help explain the structure of Florida's postsecondary educational system and potential changes. To learn more about the system, view:

- **OPI Pulse: The State University** System of Florida
- **OPI Pulse: State Universities of** Academic and Research Excellence and National Preeminence

DID YOU KNOW?

Budget Conference

Now that the House and Senate have each passed their own version of the 2012-2013 General Appropriations Act, conference committees will be appointed to resolve differences on various budget issues, as well as on conforming and implementing legislation.

Click **here** to see a list of House and Senate conforming bills that will be entered into the conference process.



Tune-in to Session Live

As the House continues to convene for the 2012 Legislative Session, you don't want to miss action taken on bills of interest. To watch session as it happens, visit the Broadcast page of the House website and click on 'live video stream.'

If you do miss a session, the Broadcast page also includes a video archives section with footage of previous meetings.

Visit the Broadcast page now to catch up on session.